

Year 4: Living things and their habitats

Topic overview for teachers

Age 8-9



This topic overview is based on the PLAN knowledge matrix (for England). Please use link:

<https://www.planassessment.com/living-things-y4>

The matrix includes:

- National Curriculum learning objectives
- Key learning
- Key vocabulary
- Common misconceptions
- Possible activities & evidence

Year 4 – Living things and their habitats

Topic	Key Learning	page
An introduction to animal habitats	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Animals live in a habitat which provides an environment to which they are suited.• A habitat provides animals with water, food and shelter.• Each habitat has different conditions such as the amount of light, the temperature and the amount of moisture.• Animals are adapted to live in their habitats.	4
Local habitats: woodland and garden habitats	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A habitat provides animals, plants and other living things with food and shelter. A small place where living things can survive is often called a micro-habitat, for example under a log.• Each micro-habitat has different conditions such as the amount of light, the temperature and the amount of moisture.	5
Making branching keys and classifying small woodland animals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Living things can be grouped or classified in different ways according to their features.• Branching keys are useful for classifying things, using descriptions of features.	6

Year 4 – Living things and their habitats

Topic	Key Learning	page
Food chains in a woodland habitat	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A food chain shows the links between different living things and where they get their energy from.• Living things can be classified as producers or consumers according to their place in the food chain.• A predator is an animal that feeds on other animals (its prey).• Animals can be described as carnivores, herbivores or omnivores.	7
Changing environments: seasonal changes and changes due to human activity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Environments change with the seasons.• Living things may change their behaviour in different seasons. Some animals may hibernate.• Humans can cause the environment to change. This can be in a good way (i.e. positive human impact, such as setting up nature reserves) or in a bad way (i.e. negative human impact, such as littering).	8



Living things and their habitats

An introduction to animal habitats

Key Learning

- Animals live in a **habitat** which provides an **environment** to which they are suited.
- A **habitat** provides animals with water, food and shelter.
- Each habitat has different **conditions** such as the amount of light, the temperature and the amount of moisture.
- Animals are **adapted** to live in their habitats.

I can...

- Describe how some animals are adapted to live in an Arctic habitat or a hot desert habitat.

Activities and Websites

- **Exploring prior knowledge about habitats.**

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/class-clips-video/science-ks1-ks2-wonders-of-nature-polar-bears-in-their-habitat/z73ygdw>

- **Looking at owls and foxes in different habitats and their adaptations.**

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/clips/zv7w2hv>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/class-clips-video/science-ks2-ks3-how-animals-have-adapted/z4y76v4>

- **Making a fact file about owls and foxes.**
- *Optional activity to extend the fact file for more animals in hot deserts or the Arctic (see lesson page 7).*



Living things and their habitats

Local habitats: woodland and gardens

Key Learning

- A **habitat** provides animals, plants and other living things with food and shelter. A small place where living things can survive is often called a **micro-habitat**, for example under a log.
- Each micro-habitat has different **conditions** such as the amount of light, the temperature and the amount of moisture.

I can...

- Describe a garden or woodland habitat.
- Identify some of the living things found in a garden or woodland habitat.

Activities and Websites

- **Exploring prior knowledge of woodland and garden habitats.**

<https://www.nhm.ac.uk/discover/earthworm-heroes.html>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/class-clips-video/science-ks1-ks2-fallen-leaves-fungi-slime-molds/z7cb47h>

- **Discussing micro-habitats.**

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p003lc9k>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p003kmh2>

- **Conducting a garden habitat survey.**
- *There are alternative activities if it is not possible to go outside (see lesson page 5 & 7).*



Living things and their habitats

Making branching keys and classifying minibeasts

Key Learning

- Living things can be grouped or **classified** in different ways according to their **features**.
- **Branching keys** are useful for classifying things, using descriptions of features.

I can...

- Make a branching key to classify a group of objects.
- Identify minibeasts using a branching key.

Activities and Websites

- **Investigating branching keys with sweets.**
www.saps.org.uk/attachments/article/1377/SA%20PS%20book%205%20-%20Grouping%20and%20Classification%20-%202016.pdf
- **Exploring animal features – odd one out.**
- **Identifying minibeasts using a branching key.**
- *Option to extend by making a branching key for four or five animals.*



Living things and their habitats

Food chains in a woodland habitat

Key Learning

- A **food chain** shows the links between different living things and where they get their energy from.
- Living things can be classified as **producers** or **consumers** according to their place in the food chain.
- A **predator** is an animal that feeds on other animals (its **prey**).
- Animals can be described as **carnivores**, **herbivores** or **omnivores**.

I can...

- Draw food chains for woodland plants and animals.
- Describe the relationship between predators and their prey.

Activities and Websites

- **Exploring prior knowledge about how animals feed.**

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/clips/z9nhfg8>

- **Understanding and describing a food chain.**

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/clips/zjshfg8>

- **Playing BBC bitesize food chain game.**

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zbnnb9q/articles/zsphrwx>

- **Drawing and describing four food chains.**

- *Optional activity to explore the relationship between ants, tiger beetles and parasitic wasps. (See lesson page 7.)*



Living things and their habitats

Changing environments: seasonal changes and changes due to human activity

Key Learning

- **Environments** change with the **seasons**.
- Living things may change their behaviour in different seasons. Some animals may **hibernate**.
- Humans can cause the environment to change. This can be in a good way or in a bad way. There can be a positive or a negative **human impact**.

I can...

- Describe how hedgehogs change their behaviour in different seasons.
- Make a campaign poster for helping to protect hedgehogs and their habitats.

Activities and Websites

- Exploring prior knowledge about hedgehogs.
- Looking at hedgehog behaviour and diet throughout the year.
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/clips/z284d2p>
- Finding out about organisations which campaign for the protection of hedgehogs.
<https://ptes.org/campaigns/hedgehogs/>
<https://www.britishhedgehogs.org.uk/>
- Designing a campaign poster.
- *Optional activity to find out about other threatened habitats and protected animals (see lesson page 7).*